

# Ambrin: Najib promised a probe

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## Issue of conflicting statements left out because of that, court told

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Former auditor-general Tan Sri Ambrin Buang told the High Court that he agreed to exclude the issue of two different versions of 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) financial statements in its final audit report as the then prime minister promised a probe into the matter.

He said he was called to a meeting by Datuk Seri Najib Razak's principal private secretary Tan Sri Shukry Mohd Salleh to discuss the audit report at Najib's office on Feb 22, 2016.

Then chief secretary to the government Tan Sri Dr Ali Hamsa was also present, he testified.

Ambrin said Najib asked him for a briefing on serious issues that were found during the audit, add-

ing that he (Ambrin) raised the matter of 1MDB having two different financial statements.

"He promised me that the relevant authorities will investigate and get to the bottom of it," the witness said.

Ambrin, 66, was under examination-in-chief by lead prosecutor Datuk Seri Gopal Sri Ram in the joint trial of Najib and former 1MDB CEO Arul Kanda Kandasamy, dubbed the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) trial, yesterday.

The court had earlier heard of a coordination meeting on Feb 24, 2016, to discuss amendments on the audit report.

Ambrin said Ali instructed him and former National Audit Department (NAD) audit director Saadatul Nafisah Bashir Ahmad to be in the Feb 24 meeting with the remaining members of the 1MDB

audit team to wait outside.

"In the meeting, Shukry said the audit report prepared by NAD could be politicised by the Opposition.

"I was also briefed that 1MDB management, led by Arul Kanda, would be able to respond to our audit report," he said.

During the meeting, Ambrin said NAD was pressured to listen to the response from 1MDB on its findings.

"Arul Kanda expressed many opinions on the two versions of financial statements produced by 1MDB and pressured NAD not to include this in the audit report.

"I had no intention to hide but agreed to not include this into the final audit report based on Najib's promise to report this to the police," he further testified.

Sri Ram: When he (Najib) said "I will get to the bottom of it", did you

believe him?

Ambrin: He was the prime minister, I had no reason to not believe him.

However, the witness said there was no confirmation whether Najib actually got to "the bottom of it".

Ambrin said he felt cheated when he discovered no police report was lodged despite Najib's assurance.

"On that premise, I agreed to drop the issue of the two versions (of the 1MDB financial statements) from the (1MDB final audit) report," he added.

Ambrin said audit director Nor Salwani Muhammad did not breach the code of conduct when she slipped a recording device into the Feb 24 meeting.

He said Nor Salwani - who was then a deputy audit director - was part of the NAD audit team which was tasked to take notes for the

internal use of NAD but ended up being left out of the meeting as there was not enough space in the room.

Ambrin said there was a standing instruction for Nor Salwani to follow all 1MDB audit report meetings.

Last week, the court heard that Nor Salwani slipped a recorder inside a pencil case belonging to Saadatul without the latter's knowledge.

Najib is accused of using his position to order amendments to the 1MDB final audit report before it was tabled to the PAC to avoid action against him.

He allegedly committed the offence in Putrajaya between Feb 22 and 26, 2016.

Arul Kanda was charged with abetting Najib at the same place and time. The hearing continues before Justice Mohamed Zaini Mazlan.